



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. AID TO TSUNAMI VICTIMS IN SOMALIA TOPS ONE MILLION DOLLARS

Nairobi, 7 February 2004 – U.S. Ambassador to Kenya William M. Bellamy announced last week that the United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided over \$1,000,000 (80 million Ksh) to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of those affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami in coastal Somalia.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has channeled \$1,034,331 through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide a variety of emergency relief activities, including assistance with shelter material, household kits, safe drinking water, and emergency medical supplies. USAID/OFDA has also contributed funds for the effective coordination of the relief effort in Somalia. In addition to the USAID/OFDA assistance, USAID Food for Peace (FFP) provides more than 50 percent of the U.N. World Food Program's (WFP) commodities in Somalia. WFP has three teams in place in the tsunami-hit areas and is currently meeting the needs of more than 30,000 of the most vulnerable people with 477 metric tons of food aid. WFP has recently welcomed the "speedy and generous response of the U.S. Food for Peace office of USAID and the US Department of Agriculture for prompt donations."

United Nations' experts estimate that 18,000 households comprising 54,000 people were affected by the tsunami disaster, which caused the most damage along a 650-kilometer stretch of coast between the island of Hafun in northeastern Bari Region, and the village of Garacad in Mudug Region. The southern coast was also affected in some areas. Homes and fishing boats were destroyed, shallow wells were buried, and livelihoods have been threatened. Currently, an inter-agency assessment is underway along the Somali coast, to identify any gaps in the present humanitarian response, and specific mid- to long-term recovery needs of affected communities. USAID continues to monitor the situation.

The tsunami disaster came at a time when 1.2 million people across Somalia are already suffering the effects of an ongoing humanitarian emergency caused by civil strife, drought and food insecurity. The U.S. Government is the largest bilateral donor to Somalia, and currently funds several humanitarian relief programs in the country. Since 1990, the U.S. Government has provided more than \$476 million to Somalia for humanitarian assistance activities.

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